

A high-level monthly briefing on operations and activities at the U.S. Department of Energy's Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory – Home of Science and Engineering Solutions. Work at the lab supports the Department's business lines of environmental quality, energy resources, national security and science.

■ ENERGY RESOURCES – Innovative Shuttle Bus Garners National Attention

A modernized version of the traditional Yellowstone National Park tour bus – developed as a low-emission, cost-effective community/transit shuttle bus of the future – made the rounds in Washington D.C. late this month. The INEEL has been working with automotive industry leaders, the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Transit Administration, the U.S. Department of Interior's National Park Service and private industry in developing the "new" yellow bus. While this modernized approach to the traditional yellow bus retains the conventional feel of the older-model park vehicles, the new version is a 16- to 32- passenger vehicle that uses alternative fuel, features a low floor and complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

■ ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY – Improved Approaches Accelerate Cleanup

INEEL workers are using better equipment and methods to make decontamination and decommissioning work faster, safer and more efficient. Two different types of industrial equipment now in use by workers are helping accelerate cleanup at Test Area North. The first is a vacuum excavation system being used to literally suck up loose dirt and rock to complete a piping removal project sooner. The other is a lightweight trenching support system. Both of these advances are cutting hundreds of hours and thousands of dollars from what would have been required using previous methods. The deactivation, decontamination and decommissioning work facilitated by these alternate approaches is an important step in accelerating overall INEEL cleanup because eliminating unused or obsolete facilities means maintenance funds can be redirected to other cleanup work.

■ NATIONAL SECURITY – Lab Sharpens Focus on Cyber Security

The INEEL Web site, like many .gov locations, is a prime target for hackers. The site is bombarded with thousands of scans a day – over 90,000 on average weekly. The threat from malicious hackers is real and the National Security Division has established an aggressive defense against this unseen enemy through its Cyber Security program and test bed. Supporting both daily laboratory operations and national security clients, cyber security experts have developed advanced intrusion detection software sensitive enough to pick up the slow scans that run below the radar of most commercial detection programs. The Cyber Security program is an integral component of the laboratory's Critical Infrastructure Assurance Initiative, along with the Wireless and SCADA (Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition) test beds.

■ SCIENCE – INEEL Researcher Named Outstanding Mentor

Eric Loewen, an INEEL nuclear scientist, has been selected to receive an Outstanding Mentor Award plaque signed by Secretary of Energy Spencer Abraham in recognition of his efforts to mentor the next generation of nuclear scientists. The DOE's Office of Science gives the award to DOE national laboratory employees who exceed expectations for mentoring interns in their fields of study. Colleagues at the INEEL nominated Loewen for the award. "He's definitely gone beyond the call of duty in working with our summer interns," said Jeff Benson, technical lead over Pre-college Programs at the INEEL.

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